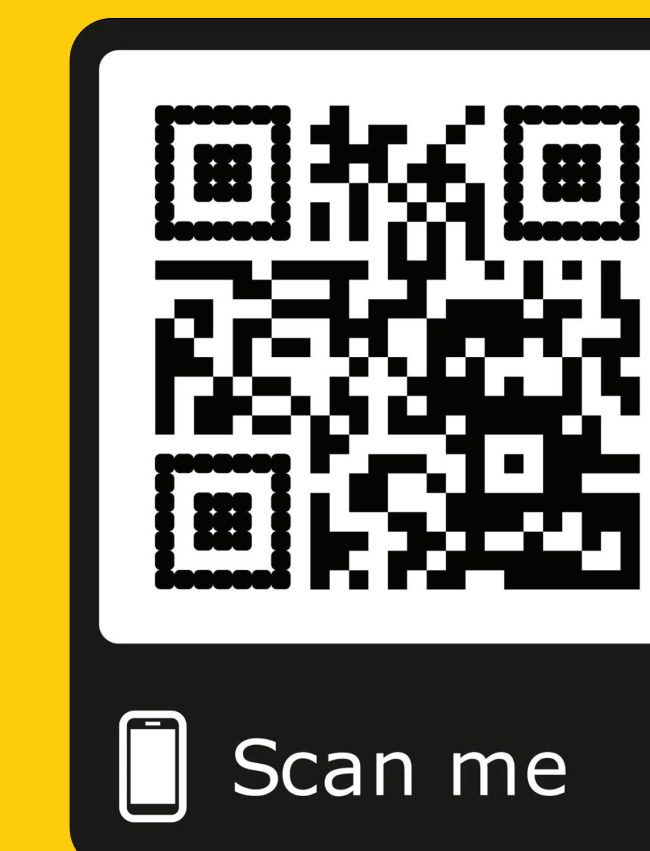




# Alternative Ways to Create an Inclusive Community Within the Library: Designing Opportunities for Everyone

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“LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE” IS A PHRASE THAT ALL LIBRARIES ATTEMPT TO ADHERE TO. LIBRARIANS WANT TO HELP PATRONS OVERCOME AND DEFY ALL ODDS. HOW CAN WE REACH OUT TO ALL PATRONS AND CREATE AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FOR EVERYONE?



## MENTAL HEALTH

Marginalized people deserve to belong. We must advocate for every person's needs. Libraries like Denver PL have teamed up with social workers, who have served over 1,200 people and helped hundreds find housing, fight substance abuse, and get mental health treatment.

## ADDICTIONS

Many public libraries have become ground zero for drug use. Librarians have a choice — we can either become first responders or we can sit on the sidelines and watch our community suffer.

Opioid deaths have risen **250%** in Iowa in the last 10 years

- + In 2015, more Americans died from a drug overdose than car accidents and gun homicides combined
- + Across the country, 91 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose
- + In 2016, 116 overdoses were reportedly reversed due to Narcan

## DEAF OR HARD-OF-HEARING

As of March 2018, there are over 466 million people worldwide that have disabling hearing loss. Of this, 34 million of these are children. It's inevitable that public libraries will have patrons that need help.

## EQUIPPING LIBRARIANS WITH PROPER TRAINING & RESOURCES

- + Taking ASL classes
- + Creating a “Good Samaritan” atmosphere within the library
- + Work closely with social workers, invite them within the library
- + Mental Health First Aid Training
- + Access to Narcan for potential overdosing patrons
- ✗ App: Narcan Now
- ✗ Website: Dontdie.org

### Small Changes = Big Differences

- + Closed Captioning on movies
- + Patience
- + Empathy
- + Use of “Relay Iowa” for deaf, hard-of-hearing patrons
- + Know the signs of drug overdoses, mental health crises
- + Continued education
- + Partnerships with local activist / awareness groups, police and fire
- + Accessibility to health and wellness resources in different places - the front desk, in the stacks, the website.

## TATTOOS FOR READERS' ADVISORY

In 2016, librarians at an Oregon library (MCL) tweeted — show us your tattoos and we will recommend a book! More than 400 people submitted tattoos to MCL and the program was featured in national news. The trend spread to Denver and beyond, with enormous success.

“Sometimes people with tattoos can feel excluded or maybe like they aren't welcome. It was a nice way to reach other populations and let them know the library is cool. It's not the same place you got kicked out of as a teenager.”

— DPL SENIOR LIBRARIAN TARA BANNON WILLIAMSON

In some libraries, a group of librarians reviewed the submission and brainstormed book matches, before alerting the patron via social media. Other libraries invited patrons to come into the library and show staff their tattoos, with librarians doing RA on the fly, using “cheat sheets” for books.

## Creating Collection Development Opportunities | WHERE DIVERSE CHARACTERS ARE HIGHLIGHTED AND CELEBRATED

